

The Boasting Pharisee Rejected,

A N D

The Penitent Publican Pardoned;

A S E R M O N,

Occasioned by the Death of

Mr. ROBERT SEALLY.

Preached at SOUTHAMPTON, Nov. 8, 1778.

With some ACCOUNT of the DECEASED.

By WILLIAM KINGSBURY, A. M.

Published by REQUEST,

For the BENEFIT of the WIDOW.

*Bona opera non faciunt bonos, sed prius oportet bonos esse
quam faciamus bona.*

LUTHER.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

A Plain discourse, on a common theme, preached on a particular occasion, may be looked into out of curiosity, when better writings lye by neglected. This thought, (knowing that the sovereign of grace sometimes succeeds very feeble efforts, for the good of souls) encouraged me to yield to the solicitations of some friends, who wished to peruse this sermon, and to help the widow.—May it be read with seriousness, candor and prayer!

Nov. 27, 1778.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

CURIOSITY, I doubt not, hath drawn many of you within these walls, this evening. You may be come here with the same view, as, on another day, you attend a place of public entertainment, entirely for your own gratification and amusement. But, permit me to remind you, that this is not a season for trifling, and that for this, and every such opportunity, you must shortly give an account, at the awful tribunal of an impartial Judge, with whom there is no respect of persons.

Memorable is that saying of the excellent Mr. P. Henry, "It is a great loss to lose an affliction;" i. e. the *benefit* of an affliction. Every afflictive dispensation, that respects our selves, families, churches or neighborhoods, calls upon us, as it were, with the voice of the Lord, *to bear the rod, and him who hath appointed it* (a). Dying beds, opening graves,

(a) Mic. vi. 9.

A

and

and funeral rites, (however little they may be regarded) are serious, striking and faithful monitors, and read to us lectures on subjects of the greatest solemnity and importance; and it is at our peril, that we turn away our ears and hearts from them.

How many are the admonitions of this kind that have been given you! and how often have many of you been called, intreated and invited, from the pulpit, to listen to them, in vain! Now you are indulged with another, but, O consider, *this* may be the last. If it is not the mean of softening and melting your hearts, like the iron the oftener it is put into the fire, they will only grow harder and harder. May the Sovereign of all hearts, now by his secret and powerful influence, enable you to attend to and powerfully apply, what shall further be spoken from the words of our Lord,

LUKE xviii. 14.

I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

This verse is the concluding part of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican; designed to reprove the folly of those who justified themselves, and despised others; and this part of it was chosen by our dear, deceased brother, not long before he left our world, as the theme of his funeral discourse. I have cause to believe, the reasons he had for this choice, were,—That those false and rotten foundations on which, he had observed, too many build their hopes of eternal salvation, might be overturned; that *the tried stone, the precious corner stone, the sure foundation, which is laid in Zion* (b) for lost sinners to fix their dependance on; and which he found in a dying hour to be firm and immoveable,

(b) Isaiah, xxviii. 16.

might be opened to view; and that it might be proclaimed, what gracious encouragement there is given in the gospel of Christ, for convinced, humbled and penitent sinners to apply for mercy.

With these things in my view;

I. I would call upon you to consider the characters of these two men, and their pleas and pretensions. And,

II. The different success of their various claims.

I. Let us consider the characters of these two men, and their pleas and pretensions. The first was a *Pharisee*. Here was a man, who is to be considered as born a Jew, a son of the venerable Abraham; we may suppose him, like another Paul, to have been *an Hebrew of the Hebrews* (c), and able to trace, with no little pride, his pedigree, up to some eminent and highly honored ancient. *Circumcised the eighth day*; nursed up in good principles in his earliest years; sent to school in his childhood; and afterwards placed under some eminent doctor in the college, to study the law. Being arrived at maturity, instead of connecting himself with the gay and the jolly, the busy, and the money-getting world; he voluntarily separates himself from it, and enters among the sect of the Pharisees, the strictest of the Jewish religion (d). *Touching the righteousness of the law, blameless*; no swearer, sabbath-breaker, or drunkard. On the other hand, quite orderly, methodical and religious, according to the forms of the Mosaic ritual. Every day, if possible, went he to the temple to pray at the hour of sacrifice. *He gave*

(c) Philipp. iii. 5.

(d) Acts xxvi. 5.

tithes of every thing he possessed; nay, he performed works of supererogation also;—that is, he did more than the law literally required; *he fasted twice in the week.*

Up comes this precise, austere, and eminent Pharisee, as usual, to the temple to pray; methinks, I see him stop at the corner of every street, to repeat the appointed form. Every head is bowed to greet him, as he passes through the crowded marketplace; and the poor common people are ready to kiss his feet, and to intreat his prayers, as a favorite of God, as he ascends the stately steps of the temple.

When there,—He *stands* erect, as one conscious of his innocence, and assured of his favor with God. By *himself* he *stands*, as scorning to draw near the filthy publican (e); and by himself he prays, trusting in his own understanding and gifts, without once breathing a desire *for the Spirit to help his infirmities.* He begins his address,—“God, I *thank thee*,” addressing his Creator with an irreverent freedom in his air—“*I thank thee*, that
“by the good use and improvement I have made
“of my natural powers, my reason, and my free
“will, I have kept myself from sin; *that I am not*
“*as other men are, such as extortioners, unjust, adul-*
“*terers, or even as this vile wretch, this abominable*
“*Publican*, that dares presumptuously to tread thy
“sacred courts. *I fast twice in every week; I give*
“*tithes of all I possess.* Not a sprig of mint, or a
“grain of anise or cummin do I wilfully withhold.”
On such pleas as these, is the address of the Pharisee founded.

Let us now attend to the other man, who was a *Publican*. The Publicans were the gatherers of the

(e) Isaiah, lxxv. 5.

public taxes. A class of men of the vilest character, being notorious for extortion and oppression. They were peculiarly odious to the Jews, who hated taxation, at any rate, as a badge of their subjection to the Romans, and were held by them in no better estimation than thieves and pickpockets. Hence, one of the charges brought against the blessed Jesus was, that *he ate and drank with Publicans and sinners* (f); one of the most odious characters his enemies gave him, was a *friend to them* (g); and when a man was to be cast out of the church, he was to be considered *as a heathen man, and a Publican* (h).

Of the lower order * of this class was this man. And from the Pharisee's marking him out, with such peculiar marks of contempt and aversion, he may be considered as guilty of the greatest enormities. But it seems, he was a *Jew* notwithstanding, (as *Matthew* and *Zaccheus*, the chief of the Publicans, had been before their conversion) and therefore went to pay his vows also at the temple. But he, sensible of his vile character and atrocious actions, *stands afar off*, at an awful distance, *doth not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smites upon his guilty breast*, in an agony of self-reproach and contrition, and earnestly cries, "*God be merciful to me a sinner. No plea hath my poor soul, but its misery and thy rich and sovereign mercy.*"

Thus have you heard the pleas urged by each of these two men; and now, which of these appeared most likely to succeed; this vile and guilty Publican,

(f) Mark ii. 16. (g) Luke vii. 34. (h) Matth. xviii. 17.

* There were two sorts of Publicans, the *Mancipes*, who farmed the revenue, and the *Socii*, who acted under them, and were the collectors of it. *Zaccheus*, who is called [*architelones*] appears to have been one of the former, and this man one of the latter, which was most notorious for extortion.

can, or this righteous and blameless Pharisee?—Ask of many, they will reply, certainly the righteous and the good man; for the Lord heareth not sinners. But no. *The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart* (i). Which leads us

II. To shew the different success of their various claims. *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.* It is introduced by Christ, with a call upon their attention, as if he had said, “I who am your master, who am the faithful and true witness, say unto you, This poor, sinful, convinced, humble, praying Publican went down to his house justified and pardoned, and *not* the other*.” He was pardoned, and all his iniquities blotted out; his conscience was pacified, and his humble prayer accepted, while the proud thank-offering of the sour Pharisee, together with his person, was rejected.”

And now, having explained the passage, may we not from the whole raise this remark?

That, while haughty creatures, who plead their own works and righteousness for justification, are rejected of God; they, who have been the vilest and most atrocious sinners, who are humble and penitent, and who plead his mercy as revealed in the word, shall be pardoned and justified.

It is much to be lamented; that, among the comparatively few that make a profession of religion, there should be so many of these vain-glorious and

(i) 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

* It would exceed the design of a plain, popular sermon, to enter into a critical discussion of the original phrase, and to consider the various views which have been taken of it. On mature reflection, I judge what is expressed above, to be the meaning, and refer those who wish for further satisfaction to *Beza*, *Whitby* and *Guyse*, *in loc.*

confident

confident boasters in our world. There may be, there are, doubtless, some in this large assembly. O that the Spirit of the Lord may make his word, this evening, *quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of your joints and marrow, and to become a discerner of the thoughts and intents of your hearts* (k).

You must permit me, to this end, to examine your pleas, and to shew you the weakness of them. And methinks I hear you plead,

1. Your freedom from sin. You have done *no person* any harm; you are no murderer; you have never defiled your neighbour's bed; no thief, robber, or defrauder, no oppressor of the widow, poor, or the fatherless are you. But perhaps you have injured *yourself*? No, (you reply) you are no drunkard or whoremonger, wasting your substance and *consuming your flesh and your body*; no spendthrift, beggaring your self and your family. On the contrary, you have been sober and chaste, and diligently *providing for your own house*.—All this is right, but have you not injured your *Creator* and robbed him of the glory due to his name? No; you are no blasphemer or swearer; you never dared *to take his name in vain; to break his sabbath, or to profane his sanctuary*.—But with all this freedom from *actual* vice, and sins of commission; you have not the righteousness which the law of God requires, unless you perform the duties it commands. And here, I hear others of you plead,

2. You have performed many duties.—Like the young man we read of in the gospel, you are ready to say, *All these things you have kept from your youth up* (l). In particular, you are very *just* and upright,

(k) Heb. iv. 12.

(l) Matt. xix. 20.

you pay every body their own; no person can say, you ever cheated them of a farthing. You *render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor (m)*. You pay your taxes, and *titbes of all you possess*. Added to this, you may plead, you are (to use the common language) very *charitable* too; that you are kind, compassionate and humane; according to your circumstances, liberal to the poor, and willing to help any neighbor or fellow-creature in distress. Further yet, you may say, you are even *pious* also; that you go three times on a Lord's day to the meeting-house, or twice, or *once at least* to the church; you attend a monthly sacrament; you go to prayers or to sermon as often as you can in the week, and when hindered by weather, business, or illness, you make up the deficiency at home; that you go to prayers with your family night and morning, and perform your devotions when you are alone; and at some seasons of the year, even fast and mortify the body also *. And now you may be ready to say, "*What doth the Lord require more?*" I am a tender parent "or a dutiful child; a kind master or mistress, or "a diligent servant; I am a Christian and lead a "good life; *I do justice, I love mercy, and walk "humbly with God (n); what lack I yet?*" You suspect not your state to be dangerous; and though you do not love to think of so gloomy a subject as death, yet you are not distressed at the distant thoughts of it, for you have no fear that such excellent persons as

(m) Rom. xiii. 7.

(n) Mic. vi. 8.

* These things are mentioned, not, by any means, with a view to bring good works into contempt, as some may be so mistaken as to infer; but only to particularize some of those pleas, which I have often heard urged by many, as the grounds of their hope before God.

you are, can fail of gaining acceptance with God.

But, O my dear immortal friends, though I do not mean to intimate, the duties any of you have performed, ought *not* to have been performed, yet I must tell you from God's faithful word, they are utterly insufficient to procure your salvation. The garment you have been spinning and weaving, in your own strength, will no better cover your spiritual nakedness; than the spider's slender web will clothe and defend your shivering bodies from the piercing frost on a wintry day. *Your webs shall not become garments, neither shall you cover yourselves with your works (o).* Be not angry with me, I beseech you, let not pride and passion arise, till you have heard me out, till I have shewed you the reasons wherefore your works are insufficient, and consequently such pretensions to the favor of God, as are founded on them, are weak likewise.

1. Because, all that you have done falls vastly short of what the holy law of God requires. That demands, and will accept of nothing less than *perfect* obedience, in the *thoughts* and the *words*, as well as in the *life*: *Thy commandment*, says David, *is exceeding broad (p)*; like a vast ocean it spreads out itself far beyond the ken of conceited self justifiers, who imagine it bounded by their sight, and easily sailed over. I wish them to consider *that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all (q)*; and to lay to heart that tremendous declaration of the inspired Paul, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the book of the law to do them (r)*. Now, have you never gone aside from God? Have you ne-

(o) Isaiah, lix. 6.

(p) Ps. cxix. 96.

(q) James ii. 10.

(r) Gal. iii. 10.

ver in your whole life, committed a single sin? Have you never *spoken unadvisedly with your lips*? never let a profane, foolish, or lying word drop from your tongues? Have you never admitted, or indulged a proud, revengeful, impure imagination in your mind? Never felt the risings of envy and malice?—If you have, certainly your obedience is not perfect, and therefore comes short of what the law of God requires.

And not only doth the law of God require *perfect* obedience, but *constancy* and *perseverance* in it; at *all* times, without the *least* relaxation, or intermission. *Cursed is every one that CONTINUETH not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Observe, I beseech you, that word “*continueth*.” One iniquity, one neglect, one delay, will spoil all. “There is more “virtue (as an author observes) in one sin to destroy, than in all your righteousness to save you “alive.” Now, who of you hath continued in the *uninterrupted* performance of your duty? Who hath not tired and fainted in his way? Who can dare to say, that at *no* time he hath been off his guard, and hath been surprized by sin? If so, your obedience is not that continued obedience the law of God requires, consequently is not pleadable for your justification by the law. Suppose a man indicted for any *one* crime at a human tribunal, will it be sufficient, to procure his acquittal, for him to plead, that in ten thousand *other* respects he had obeyed the law of the land? Will all his *former* conformity to it, make him less guilty of the present charge? How weak would be the plea of a forger, who had been found guilty only once, to urge that this was the first and only time he had offended? The law of man admits of no such plea. In one instance it
has

has been broken, and for that it will certainly condemn. And is the law of the King of Heaven less severe?

Further, God's law not only requireth perfection and perseverance, in obedience, but that all be done from a *principle of love*.—Attend to what our Lord declared, when he was asked, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus replied, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (s).*

Now, have you done every thing in religion out of a supreme love to God, because you delighted to please and obey him? Have your whole mind, heart and soul gone forth, every day and hour to seek his honor and service? Have all your thoughts been engaged in contriving how you should, in the best way glorify him? When your own worldly interest and carnal pleasure, and his command, have been in opposition to each other, have you, with pleasure, preferred his will to your own gratification and advantage? Have you longed and languished after Him, as your chief good?—Have you been disinterested in what you have done for your neighbor? Have you done every thing for him, as, if you had been in the same condition, you would have wished him to do for you?—Alas, on the other hand, have you not performed many duties, because you feared hell, if they were neglected; because you were frightened to them by a threatening conscience: And have you not been kind to your neighbor, urged on by some selfish motive or other? Ah! then, what righteousness is

(s) Matt. xxii. 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.

yours ? It is destitute of the grand ingredient that is required by the law, I mean *love*. Will this *dead, mechanical* religion, this *forced* morality, these *clock-work* duties, which will no longer go, than while the weights of slavish fear, and carnal considerations hang upon them, be accepted by God, instead of a *living, active, voluntary, cheerful* obedience ? Surely no. *He is a Spirit*, and demands of us *to worship and serve him in spirit and in truth* (t). He demands the heart, as a *living* and voluntary sacrifice, and will not accept the dead carcase of duties, dragged (if I may so speak), by compulsion into his presence, and forcibly laid upon his altar.—Why then should you rely any longer on your works ? *Why should you make yourself rich*, (u) while you are miserably poor ? The glittering things you offer are *weighed in the balance* of the law and are *found wanting* (x) ; they will not, *cannot* be received as sterling into the treasury of Heaven. O that the Almighty Spirit might persuade you to leave off this losing trade, to declare yourself a poor bankrupt that has nothing to pay, and to fall down before your heavenly Creditor, and, with the Publican, to cry “ *God be merciful to me a sinner.* ”

But I have not done with the pretensions and pleas of the self-righteous yet, till I have given you another reason wherefore they are vain ; viz.

2. Because there is a *sinfulness* in them, which renders them even displeasing, and odious in the sight of a holy God.—A mortifying declaration indeed, at which the haughty heart spurns with indignation and contempt ! But I must tell you the ground on which it is built.

The works of the self-righteous are hateful to God, because they are the offspring of an unregene-

(t) John iv. 24.

(u) Prov. xiii. 7.

(x) Dan. v. 27.

nerate and corrupt nature. The Lord himself declares concerning men, *They are altogether become filthy* (y). Not only the whole *race* but the whole *nature* of man is corrupted. Now, as a *corrupt tree cannot yield good fruit* (z), or a bitter spring send forth sweet water; so neither can the defiled heart of man produce any truly good works. Works outwardly fair and beautiful to the eye, it may produce, but they are like some finely colored fruit, charming to the sight, but full of deadly poison. O take heed lest you should be found to be of that large generation, *that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness* (a).

Self righteousness is displeasing to God on a further account, because it often is actuated by hypocrisy and pride. With what peculiar severity and indignation, did he *who knew what was in man, smite the Pharisees with the rod of his mouth*. How often does he who never *spake unadvisedly with his lips*, call them hypocrites, and denounce woes upon them (b)!

And doth not any part of their character, ye self-confident professors belong to you? While ye *make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, are ye within full of extortion and excess*? Though ye *appear indeed beautiful outward, are ye, within like whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness*? Under the profession of religion do you indulge yourselves in secret crimes? or at least, do not envy, malice, pride and covetousness remain undisturbed in your hearts? Or, *Do ye not your works to be seen of men; and make LONG OR LOUD prayers*, that others may observe your devotion, or admire your excellent gifts? Or do you secretly swell with the proud conceit of your own goodness, and your superior excellence to other

(y) Ps. xiv. 3. (z) Matt. vii. 18. (a) Prov. xxx. 12.
(b) Matt. xxiii. 13, to the end.

men?—O Sirs, if there was nothing else to corrupt your duties, *these dead flies would cause them to send forth a stinking savor (c)*, and render them odious unto a holy God. *God will resist the proud (d)* under every shape; *and he that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord (e)*.

The last reason I shall mention, why self-righteousness is so hateful to God, is; Because it is set up, in competition with, and opposition to, the only justifying righteousness revealed in the gospel, which is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory (f)*. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved (g). But, what are ye doing who are seeking after salvation, by your own works? Are ye not putting your selves in the place of the only appointed Saviour, usurping his throne, and practically saying we will not be beholden to the righteousness of another? Ye are despising the sterling gold, stamp'd with the authority of Jehovah, and offered to poor insolvent sinners, to pay their debt and set them free, and presenting for payment, the base counterfeit goodness of your own coining. What is this but high treason against the Majesty of heaven, aggravated by the vilest ingratitude? Will he not resent such an indignity as this cast upon his mercy, his expensive salvation, and his crucified Son? Shall that free, glorious salvation, in the thoughts of which he delighted from eternity, which was procured at such an infinite price in time, which hath employed his wisdom

(c) Eccl. x. 1. (d) 1 Pet. v. 5. (e) Prov. xvi. 5.
 (f) Isaiah xlv. 24, 25. (g) Acts iv. 12.

to contrive, and his power to execute, and in which all his perfections shine, be set at nought, and he take no notice of it? Sirs! I scruple not to say, works, when set up as rivals and competitors with Jesus Christ, are *infinitely detestable*, and are to be ranked among the vilest of rebellions against the God of heaven.

But some will say, they neither mean to exclude Christ as unnecessary to salvation, nor to trust wholly upon themselves; but hope to be accepted and saved for what they have done, *through Christ*; they are for compounding matters with their heavenly Creditor, for doing what they can themselves, and then trusting in Christ for the rest. But will this way of proceeding be acceptable to God? No Sirs, it is an attempt to be a partner with Christ in his throne, and in the revenue arising from his salvation; and if our proud hearts pretend to have *any* share, sure I am, they are so encroaching, though they may compliment the Saviour with bringing in his name, they will allow him but *very little*. The scripture tells us, not, that there is salvation in us, and in Christ joined together, but, *that there is salvation in NO OTHER than in him (b)*, neither in *whole* or in *part*.—That *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified (i)*, not in the least degree, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin*; it convinces of, and condemns for it. *That a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law (k)*; that his own works have no share at all in procuring pardon and acceptance with God. *That by Grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; NOT OF WORKS lest any man should boast (l)*. Not that good works are excluded the practice of those who profess to be saved *wholly* by

(b) Acts iv. 10.

(i) Rom. iii. 20.

(k) Ver. 28.

(l) Eph. ii. 8. 9.

grace:—No, they are the *fruit*, though not the *root* of salvation; the *effect*, though not the *cause*; as it follows, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (m). To shut up this argument; with what clearness and force, doth the apostle declare, that if salvation is by grace, then, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work (n).

From these scriptures, you see then, how the works of the law are excluded from having any interest in procuring salvation, and that it is *Grace reigns*, like a sovereign queen, without a rival, *thro' righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord* (o). And if it is so, you who are seeking justification by your works, in part, as well as in whole, are seeking it *not* in a gospel way, but in a legal way; not in God's way, but in your own. And shall you succeed? Did *they* succeed, who of old sought it in this way? No. *Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. And wherefore not? Because, they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they stumbled at that stumbling stone* (p). And how can you expect it? How can you expect that grace's foe, and one that affects to be Jesus's partner, can be accepted? May you not rather fear lest all your oblations should be flung as dung in your faces, and yourselves be banished eternally from the divine presence, as proud, unhumbled sinners, that would not submit to the righteousness of God (q)?

Thus have I examined the pleas and pretensions of the self-righteous, and have shewn why they shall

(m) Eph. ii. 10. (n) Rom. xi. 6. (o) Rom. v. 21.
(p) Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33. (q) Rom. x. 3.

be rejected;—because their works are destitute of that *perfection, perseverance, and cheerful love*, which the law of God requires; and are full of that *corruption, hypocrisy, pride and opposition to Christ* and free grace; which the heart of God abhors.

I am now brought to the other part of the proposition, viz. That they who have been the vilest, and most atrocious sinners, who are made humble and penitent, and who plead divine mercy, as revealed in the Word, shall be pardoned and justified.

This is the *good tidings of great joy*, I have again the honour to proclaim, That there is a SAVIOUR for SINNERS, even *Christ the Lord* (r). What though by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified,—yet, now the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto ALL, and upon ALL that believe, for there is no difference (s). JESUS, the eternal Son of Jehovah, though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, agreeable to the counsels of peace, made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (u). He bore the curses of the law, which sinners had deserved, and fulfilled the commands of it, which sinners had broken. By the sacrifice of himself, which he offered up, he satisfied divine justice, honored all the attributes of the divine nature; and by the price of his blood, he obtained eternal redemption for all that obey him (x). The precious streams which ran from the opened fountain of his heart, are able to cleanse from sins of every dye, sinners of every

(r) Luke ii. 10, 11.

(s) Rom. iii. 20, 21, 22.

(u) Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8. (x) Heb. ix. 13. Ch. v. 9.

age, sex or degree. No case so desperate that this medicine cannot reach; no wound so deep that this balsam cannot heal; no stain so great, that this all purifying fountain cannot wash away.—The poor publican that had been so vile, *went down to his house pardoned and justified.* There is then free, full, everlasting salvation for the most guilty and wretched. But, lest any should turn this most charming doctrine into licentiousness, I must observe, and my text leads me to it;

1. That this free pardon, is only bestowed on those sinners, who see, feel and bewail their lost and miserable condition. So you find the Publican did in this short, but most comprehensive prayer, or humble sigh as I may rather call it. “*God be merciful to me a sinner,* an abandoned wretch, the vilest among the vile. Odious in the sight of thy purity; and righteously condemned by thy holy law. O save me from thy deserved wrath, and pluck me from that hell, to the gates of which, my sins have almost brought me.” *They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not,* (says the condescending Emanuel) *to call the righteous but sinners to repentance* (y). Hence arises that invitation, which hath so often proved a refreshing cordial to fainting souls, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* (z).

Ye, whose consciences are fast asleep, stupified and intoxicated with sin; ye, who are slumbering on the couch of carnal security, and dreaming of pleasures, possessions and wordly enjoyments, know well that such a call is little to you. Ye are *already* at rest, May divine grace effectually rouse you, lest,

(y) Mark ii. 17.

(z) Matth. xi. 28.

ye should never awake, until ye lift up your eyes in hell!

Widely different, is the case of those who are brought home to Christ.—The spirit of all grace hath opened their eyes, convinced their understandings, and alarmed their consciences with a view of their perishing condition. Conviction of sin, like the surgeon's instruments, is necessary to open the wound, and to probe it to the bottom, that the corrupt matter may be let out, and a way opened for the application of an healing balsam.—“It is not “to recommend *us* to *Christ*, (as an excellent divine “observes) but *Christ* to *us* *.” The mockers and murderers of Jesus would never have cried out, *Men and brethren what shall we do*, and believed in him they had a few weeks before insulted and crucified, had they not first *been pricked in their hearts* (a).

2. Pardon and justification are granted only to them who are truly willing, and earnestly desirous to be delivered from the power of sin. Not to you who are swallowing down *iniquity like water* (b); who eat sin's forbidden food in secret, and roll it, as a sweet morsel, with relish and delight under your tongues, and then, like the adulteress, *wipe your mouths, and say we have done no wickedness* (c). Be not deceived. The Spirit of God gives the convinced sinner to see the *evil* of sin, to taste that it is *bitter*; to experience that it is *poisonous* too; and therefore he cannot love it any longer. It is daring hypocrisy,—it is a kind of blasphemy against the omniscience of God, for a man to cry “*God be merciful to me a sinner*,” and yet secretly indulge himself in sin. Such prayers as this, so far from being prevalent, are even *an abomination* (d).

* Firmin,
(c) Prov. xxx. 20.

(a) Acts, ii. 37.
(d) Prov. xxviii. 9.

(b) Job, xv. 16.

With what indignation did God refuse the petitions of those hypocrites of old, *When ye spread forth your hands to pray, I will bide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood (e)!*—Sirs, it is a divine maxim, *He that confesseth and FORSAKETH his sins shall have mercy (f).* Not that the returning sinner shall have mercy, *because* he leaveth his rebellions, but he can never accept of a compleat Saviour from *sin* as well as from hell, till he is willing to be separated from all his abominations. Hence it is, that Christ is preached as *exalted to give repentance, as well as remission of sins (g).* When sinners are invited to return to the Lord, they are instructed to pray, *Take away all iniquity (h);* and when they obey the call, they are represented as saying, *What have I to do any more with idols (i)?*

3. Pardon and justification are granted only to those, who renounce all other confidence, but in the mercy of God, as it is revealed in the gospel, through the righteousness of Emanuel. “*God be merciful to me a sinner,*” was the Publican’s cry. “Extend thy compassionate regard to me, as a poor guilty wretch, in the way most consistent with the honor of thine own glorious perfections.”—Humbled criminals, at the feet of God, intreating forgiveness, will not dare prescribe to their offended Judge, on what terms they are to be pardoned. They will joyfully receive mercy in the way he thinks most proper to bestow it. They will not insult his wisdom and justice by depending on his absolute goodness, nor will they dare to plead, “how they will reform and repent, and what they will do to make up the injuries they have done his law, if

(e) Isaiah, i. 15. (f) Prov. xxviii. 13. (g) Acts v. 31.
(h) Hof. xiv. 2. (i) Ver. 8.

"he will forgive them." This is not the language of humility, but of self-confidence and pride.

That heart was never effectually convinced that doth not see the need of a better righteousness than its own; nor effectually humbled, that does not cordially submit to that righteousness which God has provided. Here it is that many stumble. But the soul whose *loftiness is bowed down and whose haughtiness is laid low, is willing that the Lord alone should be exalted in that day*, he receives mercy. "Lord, will he say, I have nothing of my own to plead; no satisfaction can I render to thy injured justice; no righteousness, for the reparation of thy broken law; no work, duty or thought, that will bear the examination of thine all-searching eye, or the touchstone of thine impartial law. But, glory be to thy Name, thou hast revealed a Saviour dying for the ungodly (k); thou hast brought thy righteousness near to them who were afar off from righteousness (l); and hast proclaimed, *whoever believes, accepts and pleads it, shall not perish, but have everlasting life (m)*. Lord, with a trembling heart, I humbly presume to believe; with a trembling hand, I accept thine offered, thy free salvation; with a trembling tongue, I make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only (n). I take thee, blessed Jesus, to be my Lord and my strength; to deliver me from the power, as well as the guilt and condemnation of sin."

And thus it is, that while others who are ignorant of God's righteousness, and go about to establish one of their own, like the Pharisee in my text, are rejected; humbled, penitent, self-emptied, and believing sinners, like the Publican, however vile they may

(k) Rom. v. 6. (l) Isaiah, xlvi. 12, 13. (m) John iii. 16.
(n) Ps. lxxi. 16.

have been, who accept of divine mercy, as exhibited and offered in the gospel, are pardoned, accepted and saved. *He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him (o).*

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. And now, O ye Pharisaic professors, who are going about to establish a righteousness of your own, if what we have said is true, let me call you again to consider the exceeding folly and vanity of your attempts. With equal ease might the Babel builders have gained the skies by means of their tower, as ye by your works. Let me again call upon you to consult the sacred oracles, and compare your performances with their demands;—and, O that ye may be brought to see, how far short they all fall of that *perfection* and *perseverance*, of that *affection*, *delight* and *love*, which God requires! O that the glass of the divine law, might be held up, by the Spirit, before the face of that goodness which is so beautiful in your eyes, and you will see its features are distorted and ugly; you will see it to be what it appears before the searcher of hearts, disguised pride, affectation, hypocrisy, and opposition and rebellion against Jesus Christ and his salvation.

Was not Paul before his conversion, as blameless and conscientious as any of you can pretend to have been? But when the law of God was applied to his conscience, *sin was made to appear sin (p)*, and he found what he did not suspect before, that in him there was *all manner of concupiscence (q)*. He then accounted all his former boasted righteousness to be but

(o) John iii. 36.

(p) Rom. vii. 13.

(q) Ver. 8.

as *dung that he might win Christ, and be found in him (r)*. He acknowledged, with triumphs of praise, that he was saved *as the chief of sinners*. And that the *grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (s)*. And what are ye, who think of being saved any other way? Oh! what scales of spiritual blindness cover your eyes! Oh! what pride swells your hearts!—Sirs, your towering crests must be lowered before you enter into the gate of heaven. None but the humble enter there. Ye must be made willing to be pardoned and saved in the same way with harlots, publicans and sinners, if ever ye are saved at all. And oh! painful as is the task, I must in faithfulness tell you, **IF YE ARE NOT SAVED AS SINNERS, AS SINNERS YE SHALL BE DAMNED**. But ah, to what purpose do I speak these things? Very few of the Pharisees believed of old, and but few, I fear, of this character will believe now. However, *all things are possible with God (t)*. *Thine arm, Almighty Jesus, is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is thine ear heavy that it cannot hear (u)*! Crown this feeble attempt with success; and thine shall be the praise.

I must now add,

2. A word of caution to the open sinner. Sinner! dare not to persist in thy sin, because mercy is to be had for the vilest among the vile. Ever remember, it is not to be obtained by the unhumbled, obstinate, impenitent unbeliever, but only by the convinced soul that sees its misery as a sinner, and longs to be delivered from the *bonds of iniquity as well as the gall of bitterness (x)*. Again, I beseech, I charge you, beware of a presumptuous hope of obtaining mercy and forgiveness, while you dare to go

(r) Phil. iii. 8, 9. (s) 1 Tim. i. 14, 15. (t) Matth. xix. 26. (u) Isaiah, lix. 1. (x) Acts, viii. 23.

on in the practice of any known transgression. But, should there be an unhappy creature here, so desperate, as to do evil that good may come (y), or to presume to continue in sin that grace may abound (z); should there be among you a root that beareth such gall and worm-wood as this; and it cometh to pass, when he beareth the words of the curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk after the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, and sin to sin; let him hear the word of the Lord;—*The LORD WILL NOT SPARE HIM.* Divine forbearance itself will be tired of such a wretch, and the anger of the Lord and his jealousy, which is his fiercest anger, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him (a).

But at the same time,

3. What charming encouragement arises from what hath been said, to the distressed and humbled sinner, who longs to be saved both from sin and hell! Here we see a penitent publican pardoned; in another place we read of a repentant Magdalene, receiving the full forgiveness of all her sins; elsewhere, of those who had been unrighteous, idolaters, thieves, covetous and drunkards, (and who, while they remained so, could not inherit the kingdom of God,) we hear (I say) of their being justified from all their guilt, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and of their being sanctified, and saved from their sins, by the Spirit of our God (b). Could the spirits of the just, made perfect in holiness, address us here below, what surprizing lectures of pardoning love, would they read us, what wonderful histories of the riches, of the exceeding abundance of free grace (c), would many of them relate! Our departed friend would not, I am sure

(y) Rom. iii. 8. (z) Rom. vi. 1. (a) Deut. xxix. 18, 19, 20. (b) 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. (c) 1 Tim. i. 14.

be silent.—Methinks, I hear him, at this moment, address poor wounded souls, from yonder glorious world, in some such strains as these :—“ Time was, brother
 “ Sinner ! when *I was a blasphemer, a swearer, a*
 “ *persecutor, a sabbath-breaker, and injurious ; but*
 “ the Lord met with me in the way, humbled my
 “ soul, and taught me to cry, *God be merciful to me*
 “ *a sinner ; I obtained pardon, and have now finally*
 “ *overcome every foe, by the blood of the Lamb.*

“ Now sinners black as hell

“ For hope may still have ground ;

“ For who of mercy needs despair,

“ Since I have mercy found * ?”

What encouragement then, have convinced sinners, to apply for pardon, seeing so many, as vile as they, have obtained it ? Still *the blood and spirit of Christ* are efficacious to *cleanse from all sin* ; still the sweet declaration stands on record, *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out* (d). Come then, ye poor, trembling, condemned convicts, fly to the footstool of your offended Sovereign. Cry for mercy. Plead the sacrifice and righteousness of the Saviour. Plead, earnestly plead his promises. Remember, he himself is now at *the right hand of the Majesty on high, to make intercession for all that come to God through him* (e). Delay no more. Delays will only aggravate your distress. The more guilty, the more wretched, the more imminently dangerous your condition, the more need ye have of mercy. If ye stay where you are, ye perish ; ye can but perish if ye go.

And with the same arguments, may the backslider, who is filled with a distressing sense of his own ways, be animated to *return to the Lord, from*

* A verse found in one of his papers, applied to himself.

(d) John vi. 37.

(e) Heb. i. 2. vii. 25.

whom he hath revolted (f). 'Tis true, thou hast grieved the good spirit, and wounded thy Lord.—Thou mayest well *lie down in shame, and well may confusion cover thee (g).* Nevertheless, do not despond. He that justified publicans, pardoned Peter also. He invites, in the most tender terms, such wanderers as thou art to come back. *Return ye backsliding children, for I will heal your backslidings.—* O that thou mayest be enabled to reply, *Behold I come unto thee for thou art the Lord my God (h)!*

I conclude,

4. With a short admonition to those that have received mercy.

Be ye often looking back, with humility and shame, on your former state, in which ye were strangers, yea even enemies to the blessed and loving Saviour.—Ever acknowledge, with adoring thankfulness, at the footstool of God, your everlasting obligations to his rich, sovereign, distinguishing grace; and sometimes call upon them *that fear the Lord, and tell them what he has done for your souls (i).* Daily be renewing your acts of faith, on the blood, righteousness, and intercession of the Lord Jesus;—Call to mind, ye are not your own, but his property; that he is your Master, Lord and King. Ever remember the snares and temptations to which ye are exposed, and the many enemies of your peace and holiness, by which ye are beset, both within and without; and exercise an hourly dependance on the teaching, grace, and strength, which Christ hath promised to his people. Finally, be concerned *to bring forth fruits meet for repentance (k).* Dread the thought of wounding your Lord in the house of his friends; and of putting him to open shame before a scoffing

(f) Isa. xxxi. 6.

(g) Jer. iii. 25.

(h) Jer. iii. 22.

(i) Ps. lxxvi. 16.

(k) Matt. iii. 8.

world. Ever keep the remembrance of his dying groans and agonies, for your sin, alive in your minds. O! if ye have *any* love for, and gratitude to, such a friend, if ye have any zeal for his glory and honor,—study his will,—*adorn his doctrine*,—and keep all his holy commandments.

YE will now naturally expect me to add something concerning our deceased friend. And, I would, by no means, hide it from you, that once he was like the Publican, of whom ye have been hearing. “When very young,” (to use his own language) “he was a pattern of wickedness to other boys, in cursing, swearing, and evil speaking *;” which he practiced at that dreadful rate, that he was severely reprov’d, even by the profane themselves. Added to this, he was a sabbath-breaker, but was ever restrained from the beastly sin of drunkenness, which is an inlet to almost every other abomination; for which he much adored the divine mercy. He records with much thankfulness, the amazing patience and forbearance of God, exercised towards him, while he was going on in sin, especially for preserving him from being drowned, of which he was twice in the utmost danger.

While he was in this state, he had many convictions, and formed many resolutions, which were soon entirely forgotten. But, one evening, he went to the little meeting-house, in St. Mary’s, to hear an occasional sermon, “more out of vain curiosity, “and to pass away time, than any thing else;” and the word of God laid hold of his conscience. The text was, John v. 25.—“The moment the preacher “mentioned his text, he thought he spake to him; “and, when he applied his doctrine, he was plainly

*The words between inverted commas, are, very nearly, his own.

“ convinced, he was the person spiritually dead. He
 “ went home, and sat himself down to consider
 “ about it, and the more he thought of it, the more
 “ he was convinced of its truth.”—From that time,
 he evidently became serious and thoughtful, and
 was brought to the feet of mercy in fervent prayer.
 At length, by hearing and reading the word, he was
 led to understand the way of salvation. He pleaded
 the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, and found
 peace with God. His temper, discourse and life,
 were evidently and remarkably changed, and, I
 believe, all that knew him, must attest, (as I can,
 for near fourteen years) that to his dying day, he
 was enabled to maintain a conversation becoming
 the gospel of Christ.

I have reason, from some private papers in my
 hands, to think, that he was a remarkably consci-
 entious person, one that narrowly watched his
 heart and temper, and deeply lamented those things
 in his thoughts, and affections, which many others
 scarcely observe. It appears also, that he was much
 in secret prayer, and could not be satisfied without
 the enjoyment of God in that duty.

Nor did he think attending secret duty a suf-
 ficient excuse for forsaking the assemblies of the
 saints. At social and public worship, (unless called
 away by any thing extraordinary) whoever was ab-
 sent, he was sure to be present; so improving his
 time in worldly business, as seldom to permit it to
 hinder him from attending meetings, for social
 prayers, conference, and occasional lectures.

But, at the same time, no person can, with truth,
 say, that he was, (to borrow a phrase) “ so addic-
 “ ted to religion,” as to neglect his secular busi-
 ness. In his occupation he was early, skilful, ac-
 tive, diligent and honest. Little as he depended on
 his own righteousness, he regarded the weighty mat-
 ters

ters of the law, out of a love to Christ, and a concern for his glory.—It has afforded me sincere pleasure to hear, with what respect, persons of a different denomination, spoke of him, as, in his station, a good member of society. He was remarkable for sincerity, faithfulness, and plainness of speech. He would speak his mind, on a proper occasion, let who would be offended, and thought it his duty, not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them.

Though not favored with a liberal education, he had a mind that scorned to take any thing on trust; he read and studied the scriptures for himself; like the Bereans, searching them whether the things he heard were true; and had resolutely begun (having some acquaintance with the Latin tongue) to learn one of the languages in which they were written, that he might get his knowledge from the fountain-head. He had a surprizing fluency, fervency, and connection in prayer, and an excellent talent for conversation. He was an earnest pleader for souls at the throne of grace, longed for their salvation; and occasionally exercised the gift God had bestowed on him, in compassionately preaching the gospel, especially to the poor and ignorant, who had but little opportunity for gaining instruction; and this I have heard, he did in a remarkably pathetic and acceptable manner, much to the edification of many.

His active spirit was always busy, when his worldly business was finished, either in gaining knowledge for himself, or communicating it to others; and there are some that can attest, that his lips fed many.

You will now naturally enquire how he died. I saw him the day after he was taken ill. He was then persuaded he should never recover, and expressed a desire to depart; and seemed not so well pleased

pleased, that his Christian friends should be so earnest in prayer for his life, as they were. He could "talk with threatening death, and not turn pale," for he was assured that he had not followed a cunningly devised fable; he had examined his foundation well, and knew in whom he had belived.

The general frame of his mind, for the few days he survived his relapse, may be best collected from a few of the expressions he dropped at intervals, from his dying lips.

To a physical friend, who came in, and asked him, whether he knew him;—"Yes," (he replied) "but I have a better physician than you;" meaning Jesus,—When asked, whether he would have something put into his mouth, he returned,—“I shall have enough bye and bye,—I shall soon sup with Christ—I shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

“I hope you will soon be in glory;” said a friend.—“I hope so too,” he cheerfully replied.

The same day he told a friend, “I am fixed on the rock of ages.”

Another time, “To die and to be *with Christ*, is *far better* than to be in the greatest worldly prosperity.” *Far better*, was said with an accent of peculiar pleasure.

Being asked, whether he had rather live or die, he answered, “*To live is Christ, but to die is gain.*”

When drinking, being very thirsty, he said, “he should never be satisfied, till he was drinking of the rivers of pleasure at God’s right hand.”

When asked whether he had any fears, he replied, “He had but one,” viz. “How he should bear up in this affliction, so as not to dishonor God.”

At another time he said, “My soul stays upon God, in spite of the Devil.”

At

At another; "God not only makes promises, but he keeps them too."

At another; "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

At another time, he cried out, "A little while longer, and I shall be with my Redeemer Jesus, blessed blessed, blessed be his name, for ever, for ever, for ever, for ever," till his strength was spent.

The Lord's day on which he died, being told, the minister preached a sermon on Ps. lxxiii. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever,* "O, said he, and so I feel it."

A little before he expired, he said, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." He lay quiet for about nine hours, and then calmly resigned his breath, and his soul to the Lord Jesus, *in whom he sleeps, till God shall bring him with him* (l).

Thus died our brother; and now let me call upon his nearest relative, his children, the members of the church, and his friends in general, to follow him in faith, love and duty, *considering the end of his conversation,—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever* (m).

Let us bless God, my Christian friends, for all the benefit we have received by him, for his comfortable exit, and above all, for the joyful hope of joining with him, and all the glorified spirits above, in eternally shouting, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength and honor, and glory, and blessing* (n). Amen and Amen.

(l) Theff. iv. 14. (m) Heb. xiii. 7, 8. (n) Rev. v. 12.

